THE CHRISTOLOGY OF THE CHURCH OF THE EAST IN THE SYNODS OF THE FIFTH TO EARLY SEVENTH CENTURIES: PRELIMINARY CONSIDERATIONS AND MATERIALS

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Among Archbishop Methodios' many publications his *The Person of Jesus Christ in the Decisions of the Ecumenical Councils* (1976) provides a valuable collection of the main documents on the Christological controversies of the fifth century, together with information on modern initiatives leading to theological dialogues between the Oriental Orthodox Churches and both the Orthodox and Roman Catholic Churches. Similar theological discussions involving the Church of the East have not so far been held in modern times, and this is of course a Church with a very different tradition of Christology from that of the Oriental Orthodox Churches. The present article, which is offered as a modest tribute to Archbishop Methodios' concern for ecumenical matters, attempts to provide some preliminary considerations and documentation in the hopes that these might prove of use when such discussions with the Church of the East do eventually take place. My concern here is solely with the period that proved formative for the Christological position of the Church of the East, namely, the fifth to the early seventh centuries; and at the outset it should be stressed that my aim is merely to put forward some suggestions for ways towards a constructive understanding of the Christology of the Church of the East, and not to offer any judgement on that position.

The presentation follows the following pattern:

I *Sources*
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III *Translations of the main Christological statements in the Synodicon of the Church of the East.*
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- (i) Assembly of bishops in 612.

Sources

(a) *Synods*

Our most important source of knowledge of the official Christology of the Church of the East during the formative period of the fifth to seventh centuries[1] is provided by a collection of synodical texts usually known as the Synodicon Orientale, following the title employed by its editor, J.B.Chabot[2]; in the course of these are to be found a number of credal statements, and it is these that are translated below in III. The texts published by Chabot in fact constitute just a part of a vast synodical collection (of eighty items) which is transmitted in a number of nineteenth and twentieth-century manuscripts copied from a manuscript of the thirteenth or fourteenth century (Alqosh

1. For the background J. Labourt's *Le christianisme dans l'empire perse sous la dynastie sassanide* (Paris 1904) is still fundamental; his work is brought up to date in certain respects by J.M. Fiey, *Jalons pour une histoire de l'église en Iraq* (Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium 310, 1970). In English the best works are W.A. Wigram, *An Introduction to the History of the Assyrian Church* (London 1910) and W.G. Young, *Patriarch Shah and Caliph* (Rawalpindi 1974).

2. J.B. Chabot, *Synodicon Orientale* (Paris 1902).

AKSUM-THYATEIRA. *A Festschrift* for Archbishop Methodios of Thyateira and Great Britain.

ms 169, perhaps of AD 1298/9); the collection was put together in its present form in the eleventh century.[3] The following synods contain texts of relevance for our present purposes:

(1) *Synod at Seleucia-Ktesiphon held under the Catholicos Isaac in* 410.

It was at this synod, summoned on the initiative of Marutha bishop of Martyropolis, that the Council of Nicaea was officially recognized by the Church of the East. Prefaced to the canons of the synod is a credal profession whose Syriac text comes down in two different recensions, of which the one is transmitted in Syrian Orthodox sources[4], while the other is to be found in the manuscripts of the East Syrian Synodicon; the latter gives the Nicene Creed in its 'pure' form.

There has been a long controversy over the relationship between these two texts, Some have held that the Acts of the Synod of 410 were originally prefaced by *both* creeds, while others have claimed that the West Syrian recension represents a late interpolation (largely on the grounds of the occurrence of phraseology that seemed reminiscent of the *filioque* clause). Very recently, however, A. de Halleux[5] has demonstrated that it must in fact be the West Syrian text, and not the form in the Synodicon Orientale, that is the original; this is shown (a) by the presence of archaic phraseology in the West Syrian recension, and (b) by the appearance in the East Syrian text of certain neologisms which otherwise first occur in texts from c.A.D. 500 onwards.

The West Syrian recension concludes with the statement that "we are in agreement with the faith of the 318 bishops in the city of Nicaea; this is our confession and our faith, which we have received from our holy fathers". De Halleux very plausibly suggests that this profession of faith made at the Synod of 410 represents an adaptation of a local Persian creed made by the council fathers in the light of the Nicene Symbol.

(2) *Synod at Seleucia-Ktesiphon held under the Catholicos Akakios in* 486.

Although synods had met in 420 and 424 no credal statements were issued. Two further synods were convened in 484 and 485, during the course of a feud between the Catholicos and Barsauma, metropolitan of Nisibis.[6] The Synod of Beth Lapat in 484 evidently included a Christological statement expressed in Antiochene terms, by way of reaction against Zeno's religious policies across the border, in the Roman Empire; the canons of this synod,[7] however, along with those of a further synod in 485, were not preserved, although in all probability the tenor of their theological position is reflected in the important credal statement issued at the synod of Seleucia–Ktesiphon in 486, translated in III(b). The importance of this text lies in the fact that it is the first such statement that we possess from the Church of the East from the period subsequent to the Councils of Ephesus and Chalcedon; its language markedly belongs to the Antiochene tradition of Christology, but it can in no way be described as openly 'Nestorian'.[8] The accompanying anathemas are anti-'Theopaschite' in character.

(3) *The synod held under the Catholicos Aba in* 544.

The learned Catholicos and confessor Aba had travelled widely in the Roman Empire prior to his elevation, and it was while he was in Alexandria that he met Kosmas, author of *Khristianike topographia.* Kosmas clearly held Aba (to whom he refers as Patrikios) in high esteem.[9] It was Aba who brought back to Persia various works by Nestorius and had

3. The contents of this collection are well described by W.Selb, *Orientalisches Kirchenrecht, I. Die Geschichte des Kirchenrechts der Nestorianer* (Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften, phil.-hist. Klasse, Sb. I, 1981).

4. In Syrian Orthodox eyes the Church of the East in Persia was orthodox until the end of the fifth century, when it was 'nestorianized' as a result of the nefarious influence of Barsauma, metropolitan of Nisibis. As is pointed out below, the language of the synod of 486 is Theodorian, not Nestorian, but since Theodore was seen by the Syrian Orthodox as implying Nestorius, the epithet 'Nestorian' was misleadingly applied. (This synod was further held in abhorrence by the Syrian Orthodox since it allowed the clergy (including bishops) to marry–a canon which was invoked in recent times by Mar Shem'on XXIII, with tragic results).

5. ‚Le symbole des évêques perses au synode de Séleucie-Ctésiphon (410)', in ed. G. Wiessner, *Erkenntnisse und Meinungen II* (Göttinger Orientforschungen, I. Reihe: Syriaca, Band 17; 1978), pp. 161–90. The west Syrian recension has recently been re-edited by A.Vööbus, 'New sources for the Symbol in early Syriac Christianity', *Vigiliae Christianae* 26 (1972), pp. 291–6; the two oldest manuscripts belong to the eighth century. See also J. Gribomont, 'Le symbole de foi de Séleucie Ctésiphon (410)', *A Tribute to A Vööbus* (ed. R. H. Fissher), (Chicago, 1977), pp. 283–94.

6. For the background see S. Gero, *Barsauma of Nisibis and Persian Christianity in the Fifth Century (Corpus Scriptorum Christanorum Orientalium* 426; 1981).

7. The synod of Gregory I (605) states that at the synod of 484 Barsauma upheld the teaching of Theodore of Mopsuestia against the accusations of 'heretics' (perhaps he had Philoxenus in mind: see his letter to the monks of Beth Gogal, recently published by A. de Halleux in *Le Muséon* 96 (1983), pp. 5–79).

8. As, for example, W. de Vries in *Das Konzil von Chalkedon* (Würzburg 1951), I, p. 683. In this connection it might be noted that W. Macomber's study of this synod's Christological position ('The Christology of the Synod of Seleucia–Ctesiphon AD 486', *Orientalia Christiana Periodica* 24 (1958), pp. 142–54) gives an unnecessarily hostile interpretation of the text; his approach serves as a good modern example of how a theological statement can be understood wherever possible *in malam partem* (Macomber's later writings show more sympathy).

9. Cp. M. Wolska, *La topographie chrétienne de Cosmas Indicopleustes* (Paris 1962), pp. 63–73 etc.

them translated into Syriac (the extant Book of Herakleides was translated in 539/40[10]).

The Acts of the Synod of 544 themselves contain no Christological statement, but the Synodicon Orientale preserves a letter on 'orthodoxy of faith' by Aba, addressed to the clergy of Susa. The theological language is surprisingly traditional for the man who brought Nestorius' writings to Persia, and the profession of faith perhaps deliberately avoids any of the contentious technical terms.

(4) *Synod held under the Catholicos Joseph in* 554.

The profession of faith from this synod (held the year after the Fifth Council) is very close in tenor to the Chalcedonian definition. While the terms 'natures' and 'properties' feature in it, no mention is made either of *qnoma* (i.e. hypostasis) or *prosopon*. Those who speak of 'two Christs' or 'two Sons' are specifically anathematized.

(5) *Synod held under the Catholicos Ezekiel in* 576.

Although the synod issued no formal profession of faith, the preamble to the canons includes some passages of Christological relevance. Once again the absence of the terms *qnoma* and *prosopon* may be noted; on the other hand, at one point the phraseology „Christ who is in the flesh, *who is known* and confessed *in two natures*, God and Man, *a single Son*..." seems to echo directly the wording of the Chacedonian definition.

(6) *Synoder held und the Catholicos Isho'yahb I in* 585.

Two professions of faith are preserved, one belonging to the synod itself, the other to be found in an accompanying document which evidently belongs to the occassion of Isho'yahb's diplomatic mission to the emperor Maurice. According to the medieval chronicle known as the Liber Turris Isho'yahb's profession of faith was accepted as orthodox by the patriarchs of Constantinople and Antioch. As will be seen, the language is indeed far more Chalcedonian than Theodoran in spirit.

(7) *Synod held under the Catholicos Sabrisho in* 598.

Although no formal profession of faith is preserved the preamble contains some relevant passages.

(8) *Synod held under the Catholicos Gregory I in* 605.

It was at this synod that it was laid down that "each of us should receive and accept all the commentaries and writings of the blessed Theodore the Interpreter". The credal statement, however, is not distinctly Theodoran; it speaks of the "single union of one prosopon"; no mention is made of the term *qnoma*.

(9) *Assembly of bishops held during the interregnum in* 612

After the death of the Catholicos Gregory I in 608 the Persian Shah Khosroes II refused to let the bishops of the Church of the East to elect a successor, and during the period while the patriarchate remained vacant (till the Shah's death in 628) the affairs of the Church of the East were run by Babai the Great (see II.b.4) and Aba, Archdeacon of Seleucia. In 612, instigated by his influential Christian doctor, Gabriel of Sinjar (who was a Syrian Orthodox), Khosroes ordered that a disputation take place between representatives of the Church of the East and the Syrian Orthodox; from this occasion the Synodicon Orientale preserves a profession of faith presented by the bishops of the Church of the East to the Shah. As might be expected in the context of such a confrontation the position adopted is a hard-line one, expressed in fairly uncompromising Antiochene phraseology.

In the Synodicon Orientale there follows a series of objections against the tenets of the "Severan Theopaschites",[11] as follows:

–against those who confess a single nature and a single *qnoma* in Christ;

–against those who say that God suffered in the flesh and died in the flesh;

–against those who ask whether the holy Virgin gave birth to the God or gave birth to the Man;

–against those who falsely accuse us of confessing a quaternity in God, instead of a Trinity;

–against those who accuse us of (confessing) a duality of Sons".

These in turn are followed by a reply to two questions (clearly posed by their opponents): "Is it the Nestorians or the monks[12] who have turned aside from the foundations of the faith transmitted by the teachers of old", and „Previous to Nestorius, is there anyone who says that Christ is two natures and two *qnome*, or not?" The reply to these questions takes the form of a florilegium, and in the preamble to this there occurs an important passage which shows that the Church of the East understands the term *qnoma* in a Christological context in a markedly

10. The English translation by G.R. Driver and L. Hodgson (*The Bazaar of Heraclides*, Oxford 1925) needs to be used with caution: see R.H. Connolly in *Journal of Theological Studies* 27 (1926), pp. 191–200.

11. Chabot (*Synodicon Orientale*, p. 586) already noted that many of the arguments also occur in St. John of Damascus, *Contra Jacobitas*.

12. i.e. the Syrian Orthodox.

different sense from that of *hypostasis* in the Chalcedonian definition.[13]

(b) *Individual writers*

Besides the Synodicon Orientale there also survives a number of other texts which deal directly or indirectly with Christology; the most important of these, for the period late fourth to early seventh century, are:

(1) *Narsai*

Narsai, the famous East Syrian poet, taught at the 'Persian School' in Edessa until c. 471, when local hostility from his theological opponents led him to make a hasty move, across the Roman border, to Nisibis, where he was welcomed by the metropolitan, Barsauma, and where he eventually became head of the renowned theological School of Nisibis. He died at a great age soon after the turn of the sixth century (the exact date is not known). The following of his verse homilies, or *memre*, are of particular relevance:

–Verse homilies on the Nativity, Epiphany, Passion, Resurrection and Ascension, edited with English translation by F.G. McLeod in *Patrologia Orientalis* 40, fasc. 1 (1979)[14].

–Verse homily on the Three Doctors (Diodore, Theodore, Nestorius), edited with a French translation by F. Martin in *Journal Asiatique* IX. 14–15 (1899–1900)[15].

(2) *Cyrus of Edessa*

Cyrus, who belongs to the mid sixth century, wrote six 'Explanations of the Liturgical Feasts' which have been edited with an English translation by W. Macomber in the *Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium* 355–6 = *Scriptores Syri* 155–6 (1974). Although these are not directly concerned with Christology, the background which they provide is helpful for gaining an understanding of the general theological approach of writers in this tradition; a useful outline of this will be found in W. Mcomber's article "The theological synthesis of Cyrus of Edessa", in *Orientalia Christiana Periodica* 30 (1964), pp. 5–38, 363–84.

(3) *Discussions between Paul, Metropolitan of Nisibis and the Chalcedonians*

The text of an official theological discussion arranged by Justinian which took place soon after 561 between the Chalcedonians and Paul, the representative of the Church of the East, is preserved in a Syriac manuscript of Monothelete provenance.[16] It has been published with a French translation by A. Guillaumont, "Justinien et l'église de Perse", in *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 23/4 (1969/70), pp. 39–66.

(4) *Babai the Great*

Babai (died 628) was a prolific author who exercised a profound influence on the Church of the East, and his treatise „On the Union" (sc. of the two natures in Christ) is the one major statement on Christology that we have from the Church of the East in this period. This work was edited, with a Latin transation, by A. Vaschalde in *Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium* 79–80 = *Scriptores Syri* 34–5 (1915), together with a short treatise „Against those who say that, just as the soul and the body are one *qnoma*, so too God the Word and the Man are one *qnoma*". A useful, and sympathetic,[17] English presentation of Babai's Christology is given by G. Chediath, *The Christology of Mar Babai the Great* (Kottayam, 1982).

Whereas for most East Syrian writers it is Theodore of Mopsuestia who is the prime formative influence, Babai's Christology is clearly also influenced by the Syriac translation of Nestorius, Book of Herakleides.[18]

(5) *Martyrius/Sahdona* (early seventh century)

Martyrius, the author of a fine work on monastic spirituality, The Book of Perfection, is to be identified with the bishop Sahdona ('little martyr'), whose expulsion from the Church of the East for 'heresy' is related by Thomas of Marga and others.

Martyrius' Christological position is outlined in chapter 1 of Part II of his Book of Perfection (edited with French translation by A. de Halleux in *Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium* 214–5 = *Scriptores Syri* 90–91 (1961)). It was his formulation of a single *qnoma* in Christ (consonant with the wording

13. Translated below, III.i.2.

14. McLeod gives a short introduction; more detailed studies are provided by his dissertation, *The Soteriology of Narsai* (Pontifical Oriental Institute, Rome 1968) and in that by I. Ibrahim, *La doctrine christologique de Narsai* (Angelicum, Rome 1974/5).

15. Cp. G. Sfair, 'L'ortodossia di Narsai rilevata dalla sua omelia sui Dottori greci', *Bessarione* 33 (1917), pp. 313–27; L. Abramowski, 'Das Konzil von Chalkedon in der Homilie des Narsai über die drei nestorianischen Lehrer', *Zeitschrift für Kirchengeschichte* 66 (1954/5), pp. 140–43; K. McVey, 'The memra of Narsai on the three Nestorian Doctors as an example of forensic rhetoric', *Orientalia Christiana Analecta* 221 (1983), pp. 87–96.

16. For this aspect see my 'A Monothelete florilegium in Syriac', in *Orientalia Lovaniensia Analecta* (forthcoming).

17. The author is a Syro-Malankara priest (and so belongs to a Church with an Alexandrian Christological tradition).

18. For this aspect see L. Scipioni, 'Il Libro di Eraclide di Nestorio e il Liber de Unione di Babai il Grande', in his *Ricerche sulla cristologia del 'Libro di Eraclide' di Nestorio* (Fribourg 1956), pp. 110–58. Other important studies of Babai's Christology are by L. Abramowski, 'Die Christologie Babais des Grossen' *Orientalia Christiana Analecta* 197 (1974), pp. 219–45, and 'Babai der Grosse: Christologische Probleme und ihre Lösungen', *Orientalia Christiana Periodica* 41 (1975), pp. 290–343; V. Grumel, 'Un théologien nestorien, Babai le grand', *Echos d'Orient* 22 (1923), pp. 153–81, 257–80; 23 (1924), pp. 9–33, 162–77, 257–74, 395–99.

of the Chalcedonian definition, but going against the traditional usage of the Church of the East) that led to his condemnation by the authorities of that Church; in all other respects his Christological language remains characteristically Antiochene, as is shown by A. de Halleux in an article, "La christologie de Martyrios/Sahdona dans l'évolution du nestorianisme", in *Orientalia Christiana Periodica* 23 (1957), pp. 5–32.

(6) *Isho'yahb II*

Isho'yahb II was Catholicos from 628–646, years which witnessed the change from Persian to Arab rule. His interesting letter on "How we should confess the single propopon of Christ", addressed to a certain Rabban Abraham, has recently been published, with a French translation and good introduction, by L.R.M. Sako, *Lettre christologique du Patriarche syro-oriental Isho'yahb* II *de Gdala (*Rome, 1983).[19]

(7) *Miscellaneous Christological texts*

An important collection of East Syrian Christological texts, perhaps put together about the 9th century, includes a number of pieces belonging to the late sixth and the seventh centuries; these have been published with an English translation, by L. Abramowski and A.E. Goodman, *A Nestorian Collection of Christological Texts* (2 vols, Cambridge, 1972)[20].

(8) *Liturgical texts*

Since liturgical texts often contain important doctrinal testimony, these should not be overlooked; in particular attention should be drawn to the prayers introducing the Institution Narratives in the Anaphoras attributed to Theodore and to Nestorius, both translated into Syriac in the sixth century. A recent English translation can be found in K.A. Paul and G. Mooken, *The Liturgy of the Holy Apostles Adai and Mari together with the Liturgies of Mar Theodorus and Mar Nestorius* (Trichur, 1967), pp. 76–7, 94–6.

II

Preliminary Considerations

When studying the Christology of the Church of the East, and especially when comparing it with western positions and developments (whether Greek or Latin), a number of important considerations need to be held in mind.

(a) *Geographical*

Since the Church of the East functioned within the Sasanian Empire, and thus outide the bounds of the Roman Empire, it was not directly involved in any of the general Councils convened by imperial command. The canons and the symbol of the Council of Nicaea are indeed recognized by the Church of the East, but this was only achieved 85 years later, at the Synod of Seleucia–Ktesiphon in 410, thanks to the initiative of Marutha, bishop of Martyropolis. The Council of Ephesus (431) is specifically rejected,[21] but a more ambivalent attitude, *post eventum*, is taken to the Council of Chalcedon; thus Isho'yahb II (628–46) comments):[22]

> Although those who gathered at the Synod of Chalcedon were clothed with the intention of restoring the faith, yet they too slid away from the true faith: owing to their feeble phraseology, wrapped in an obscure meaning, they provided a stumbling block to many. Although, in accordance with the opinion of their own minds, they preserved the true faith with the confession of the two natures, yet by their formula of one *qnoma* (hypostasis), it seems, they tempted weak minds. As an outcome of the affair a contradiction occurred, for with the formula 'one *qnoma*' they corrupted the confession of 'two natures', while with the 'two natures', they rebuked and refuted the 'one *qnoma*'. So they found themselves standing at a cross roads, and they wavered[23] and turned aside from the blessed ranks of the orthodox, yet they did not join the assemblies of the heretics; they both pulled down and built up, while lacking a foundation for their feet. On what side we should number them I do not know, for their terminology cannot stand up, as Nature and Scripture testify: for in them many *qnome* can be found in a single ‚nature', but that there should be various 'natures' in a single *qnoma* has never been the case and has not been heard of.

Likewise the eighth-century writer Shahdost[24]

19. In 630 during the course of an embassy from Persia, Isho-'yahb met the emperor Heraklios at Aleppo; there his profession of faith was accepted by the Greeks and he was invited to celebrate the Liturgy, at which both the emperor and his clergy received communion (the sources are translated in Sako, pp. 42, 46–50, 53–7, 59–60).

20. For some corrections to the translation see the review by T. Jansma in *Journal of Semitic Studies* 20 (1975), pp. 93–109.

21. For a recent statement see Mar Aprem, *The Council of Ephesus of* 431 (Trichur 1978).

22. Ed. Sako, sections 42–49.

23. The French translation (p. 147) misrepresents the sense here.

24. In Abramowski–Goodman. *A Nestorian Collection*, II, p. 20. The 'falsification' of the Chalcedonian definition in the text of the East Syrian Synodicon will evidently be a subsequent development; for this 'revised' text, see A. de Halleux, 'La falsification du symbole de Chalcédoine dans le Synodicon nestorien', *Mélanges offerts à Jean Dauvillier* (Toulouse 1979), pp. 377–84 (the alterations include a change to 'two *qnome*'). Cp. also W. de Vries, 'Die syrisch-nestorianische Haltung zu Chalkedon, in *Das Konzil von Chalkedon*, I, pp. 603–35.

says that "although they (sc. the Catholicos Akakios and the Metropolitan Barsauma of Nisibis) did not accept the Synod of Chalcedon... nevertheless they did not entirely reject it".

Justinian's ecclesiastical policy, culminating in the 'Three Chapters' and the Fifth Council, not surprisingly comes under sharp attack, above all from Babai.

In all this it should always be kept in mind that, from the point of view of the Church of the East, these Councils were far from being truly ecumenical, seeing that they were only of direct concern to those living within the Roman *oikoumene*.

(b) *Political*

It was only after Christianity had been adopted as the official religion in the Roman Empire that persecution of Christians took on serious dimensions in the Sasanian Empire. It was certainly the case that, in the fourth and fifth century, persecution was a likely concomitant of any outbreak of hostilities between the two empires; indeed Persian Christians were sometimes suspected of being secret sympathisers of the enemy.[25] It is, then, possible that *one* of the reasons why the Church of the East chose to adopt a markedly Antiochene position on Christology at the Synod of Seleucia–Ktesiphon in 486 was the conscious desire to disassociate Persian Christianity from the official Christological position in the Roman Empire at the time.

The combination of geographical and political separation of the Church of the East from Christianity in the Roman Empire had a further important consequence from the point of view of Christology: since the Church of the East was not directly involved in the fierce Christological controversies taking place in the Roman Empire from the 430s onwards, its theological language and its understanding of certain technical terms remained comparatively 'old fashioned'. Any awareness of developments within the Greek-speaking world would come primarily by way of the Persian School of Edessa (closed in 489) and its successor, the School of Nisibis, and the flavour of this theological language was thus going to be essentially Antiochene, and specifically Theodoran. An Antiochene slant to Christology having been initially accepted, it is not surprising that subsequent influences from across the border should have been from theologians writing in that tradition, one of whom, of course, was Nestorius.

It is a fact that Nestorius was held in high regard by Narsai,[27] and that Nestorius' Book of Herakleides (not translated into Syriac until half a century after the Synod of 486) exerted a strong influence on the Christology of Babai,[28] but at the same time it needs to be remembered that Nestorius never came to hold anything like the position of authority that was accorded to Theodore of Mopsuestia, the 'Exegete' *par excellence*. Accordingly, it is misleading in the extreme to speak (as is often done) of a 'nestorianization' of the Persian Church over the course of the century and a half that followed the synods of the 480s; to do so is to be beguiled by the rhetorical hyperbole of the theological opponents of the Church of the East, who regularly labelled anything to do with Theodore as, by implication, Nestorian.

(c) *Linguistic*

It is well known that one of the complicating factors in the Christological controversies of the fifth and sixth centuries lay in the varying understandings that different parties had of the central technical terms οὐσία, φύσις, ὑπόστασις and πρόσωπον. This situation became all the more complex when the controversy was being conducted in Syriac rather than Greek, for two different reasons: (i) The standard equivalent terms in Syriac had a rather different semantic range from that of their Greek counterparts;[29] thus, for example, the connotations of Syriac *kyana* and *qnoma* are by no means precisely the same as those of φύσις and ὑπόστασις which they regularly represent (see further below); (ii) Over the course of the late fifth to the seventh century Syriac translation technique underwent many refinements, above all in West Syrian circles.[30] Theologians of the Church of the East, however, living outside the Roman Empire, were not always aware of these developments which took place in the eastern provinces of the Roman Empire, and chiefly in Syrian Orthodox circles.

In the Chalcedonian definition the words μία ὑπόστασις proved a stumbling block just as much to the Church of the East as they did to the Syrian Orthodox, for both groups shared the view that φύσις implied ὑπόστασις (and vice versa). Thus, to the Syrian Orthodox, ἐν δύο φύσεσι was the illogical element, since for them μία ὑπόστασις implied their own starting point μία φύσις τοῦ θεοῦ λόγου σεσαρκωμέ-

25. Occasionally this was justified, cp my ‚Christians in the Sasanian Empire: a case of divided loyalties', *Studies in Church History* 18 (1982), pp. 7–9, reprinted in *Syriac Perspectives on Late Antiquity* (London, 1984), ch. VI.

26. And perhaps earlier, at the Synod of Beth Lapat in 484; this was certainly how later Syriar Orthodox writers explained the matter (e.g. Barhebraeus, *Chron. Eccl.* III, col. 65).

27. His homily on the Three Doctors, however, suggests that he had little or no direct knowledge of Nestorius' works; probably Narsai (and others in the Church of the East) simply saw him as a martyr for the cause of Antiochene Christology.

28. See note 18.

29. This was an old problem that had already been highlighted by the Greek translators of the Hebrew Bible (e.g. when they rendered Torah by Nomos).

30. Cp. my 'Towards a history of Syriac translation technique', *Orientalia Christiana Analecta* 221 (1983), pp. 1–14.

νη;[31] to the Church of the East, on the other hand, it was the μία ὑπόστασις that was illogical,[32] since their starting point was the two natures, which for them implied two *qnome (qnoma* being the regular translation of ὑπόστασις).

In East Syrian understanting *kyana* ('nature', φύσις) is generic, while *qnoma* is an individual manifestation of a *kyana*;[33] thus the two *kyane* in Christ are often specifically described as being 'the divinity and the humanity', and correspondingly the *qnoma* of the divinity is God the Word, perfect God, and the *qnoma* of the humanity is the Man Jesus, perfect Man; and here it needs emphasizing that 'the Man'[34] is definitely never thought of as having any separate pre-existence, prior to the Union.[35] Furthermore, for all the traditional dislike of theopaschite language in writers of the East Syrian tradition, there is never any doubt that God the Word, in his humanity, suffered and died: there is no question of two subjects, as will be clear from the texts translated below in III.

Underlying the varying opposing formulations are several different understandings of the connotations of the term 'nature': to the Church of the East *kyana* 'nature' is associated much more closely with *ituta* ('essence', οὐσία)[36] than with *prosopon*, while in Syrian Orthodox tradition οὐσία and φύσις are sharply distinguished, and φύσις is associated rather with πρόσωπον.[37] This difference of usage is reflected very clearly in sixth-century translation practice in connection with the term ὁμοούσιος:

(1) East Syrian writers normally preserve the older, fifth-century, usage whereby ὁμοούσιος is translated by *bar kyana*, 'of the same nature' (lit. 'son of nature'), or by *bar ituta*, 'of the same essence' (lit. 'son of essence').

(2) West Syrian writers refine the translation usage and provide the more precise equivalents *shawe b-ituta* or *shawe b-ousia*, 'equal in essence'. Thus, in sixth-century Syrian Orthodox usage *kyana* 'nature' is kept firmly separate from *ituta* 'essence'.

On occasion some awareness is shown of the existence of an understanding of key technical terms that differs from that which the writer himself employs: thus Babai at one point[38] explains why 'the former fathers' used the formula 'one *qnoma* from two natures' (i.e. the Syrian Orthodox position); this he explains, was because they were countering Arius, Eunomius and Apollinarius who denied that Christ was either complete God or complete Man. Babai goes on to say that these fathers sometimes used *qnoma* and *parsopa* interchangeably 'just as happens now, so they say, in Roman territory'; such usage, however, is to be avoided, according to Babai, in order to counter theopaschite teaching.

In the translations in III below I regularly employ the following formal translation equivalents:

itya	(divine) Being
ituta	(divine) essence
kyana	nature
qnoma	(transliterated)
parsopa	person, prosopon.

I have preferred to leave *qnoma* untranslated in order to draw attention to the difference in sense that it has in sixth-century East Syrian texts from ὑπόστασις in contemporary Greek writers (even though it is the standard translation equivalent). It should be noted that modern translators have sometimes rendered *qnoma* in a Christological context as 'person': this is to be deplored, since it can lead to obvious misunderstandings (in none of these East Syrian texts do we ever encounter the 'Nestorian' formula of 'two prosopa')[39]

(d) *Variety of positions within the Christological spectrum*

In seeking to understand the ecclesiological dimensions of the controversies of the fifth and sixth centuries it is essential to avoid the simplistic threefold model of 'Nestorian –Chalcedonian– Monophysite'. Matters are far more complex. For present purposes one might propose the following spectrum,

31. E.g. Severus, *ad Nephalium* (Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium 119), p. 16: 'It is obvious to all who have just a modicum of training in the teachings of true religion that it is contradictory to speak of two natures with reference to the one Christ, he being one hypostasis; for whenever one speaks of one hypostasis, one must necessarily also speak of one nature'.

32. E.g. Isho'yahb II, quoted above in II.a.

33. Thus we often encounter the phrase 'the two *kyane* and *their qnome*'.

34. In East Syrian terminology 'the Man' means 'an individual human being' (in the abstract), and definitely *not* a specific person: see, for example, Babai, *Liber de Unione* (ed. Vaschalde), p. 160. Thus the phrase 'He put on the Man' in sixth-century East Syrian writers corresponds to 'He put on Adam/our humanity/(our) body', characteristic of early Syriac authors. Cp also note 60.

35. So Babai repeatedly, e.g. *Liber de Unione* (ed. Vaschalde), pp. 59, 91ff, 100, 111, 116, 244 etc.

36. Thus, from the East Syrian point of view, Cyril's μία φύσις τοῦ θεοῦ λόγου σεσαρκωμένη was barely different from saying μία οὐσία –a formulation that Cyril's expositor par excellence, Severus, of course firmly rejected.

37. Here it should be noted that normally East Syrian writers speak of three *qnome* in the Trinity (rather than three *parsope*).

38. Ed. Vaschalde, pp. 305–6.

39. For studies on the East Syrian understanding of the various technical terms reference may be made to Anon., 'On the history of the Syriac terms *ithutha, kyana, parsupa and qnuma*', in J.F. Bethune-Baker, *Nestorius and his Teaching* (Cambridge 1908), pp. 212–32, and W.A. Wigram, *An Introduction to the History of the Assyrian Church* (London 1910), pp. 279–85, besides the monographs on individual writers mentioned in I.b. Cp also J. Pelikan, *The Spirit of Eastern Christendom* (600–1700) (Chicago/London 1974), pp. 39–49.

moving from extreme Antiochene to an extreme Alexandrian Christological position:

(1) True 'Nestorians' (two prosopa).
(2) Strict Dyophysites outside Roman Empire: Church of the East.
(3) Strict Dyophysites within Roman Empire: e.g. Theodoret, Akoimetai, Roman Church.
(4) Silence over Chalcedon: e.g. Henotikon, Dionysios the Areopagite.
(5) Neo-Chalcedonians.
(6) Henophysites:[40] Timothy Ailouros, Philoxenos, Severos.
(7) Eutychians (true Monophysites).

It should of course be kept in mind that even this seven-fold model is an oversimplification in that it glosses over the various shades of opinion within each group: thus, for example, it is clear that within the Church of the East itself there were several stances, with Babai representing the strictest dyophysite position, openly rejecting the Chalcedonian position (and so presumably even those of group 3), while others[41] were evidently very close to the position of those in group 3, within the Chalcedonian camp.

Within this sevenfold model the various positions can be seen as dividing up in different ways, depending on the criterion by which they are being judged; thus, for example:

-acceptance of Chalcedonian definition:	groups 3–5
-Antiochene Christological tradition:	1–3
-Alexandrian Christological tradition:	4–7
-anti-Theopaschite:	1–3
-single subject in Christ:	2–7
-Christ is ὁμοούσιος ἡμῖν as well as ὁμοούσιος τῷ πατρί	1–6

Writers belonging to the Neo-Chalcedonian position had already conceded that the Chalcedonian definition was not an exclusive criterion of orthodoxy: ἐκ δύο φύσεων was, in their eyes, also acceptable, provided that ἐν δύο φύσεσι was not itself rejected.[42] This last point was a stumbling block for the Henophysites in the sixth century, and it remains a problem in at least some Oriental Orthodox circles today as well[43] (owing to their rather different understanding of the terminology).

With the Church of the East there is a similar problem of verbally conflicting formulae (two *qnome* against μία ὑπόστασις). Clearly if progress in dialogue is to be made, several things need to happen:

(1) The clue offered by the Neo-Chalcedonians, that orthodoxy in Christology does not necessarily have to be confined to adherence to the Chalcedonian definition, needs to be followed up and developed.[44] In other words, a criterion of orthodoxy other than that of Chalcedon needs to be applied to the sevenfold model suggested above; as a beginning one might propose the last two of the various criteria mentioned above (a single subject in Christ, and Christ as ὁμοούσιος ἡμῖν as well a ὁμοούσιος τῷ πατρί.

(2) A serious attempt must be made to penetrate behind the wording of the various formulae in order to discover how they were arrived at and (above all) the way in which they were understood by those who put them forward. And here two basic points need to be kept constantly in mind: firstly, that the central technical terms were understood in markedly different ways by the different parties;[45] and secondly, that each position was developed by way of reaction against a particular trend that was (rightly) seen as dangerously heretical: the existence of different bêtes noires led to the emergence of different emphases. With the benefit of hindsight we are able to see that, at the roots of the tragedy of these fifth and sixth-century schisms, lay the failure on all sides to make the necessary effort of imagination: each party saw its opponent's position only in the light of its own understanding of the technical terminology and only in the light of its own fears and preoccupations. A clear example of such misunderstanding is provided by the two sides of the so-called Theopaschite controversy.

(3) The concentration of attention on a restricted area of Christological terminology needs to be avoided. Thus, in the case of the Church of the East, it would be unfair to find fault with its favoured imagery of 'the temple' or 'the clothing', taken in isolation; it so happened that, for various reasons, this imagery (which had perfectly respectable Biblical origins) came to be dropped in the sixth century by virtually everyone living within the Roman Empire, and was thus preserved and developed only by the Church of the East, beyond the borders. Furthermore we should remember, not only that this imagery is archaic, but also that its advocates themselves insist that no one image should be taken in isolation: each image needs to be used in conjunction with a variety of others as well, seeing that no single image can provide an adequate analogy to the nature of the union of the two natures in Christ.[46]

40. It is very important to avoid the term ‚Monophysites' for this group.

41. These will have included Henana and Martyrius.

42. This was also Justinian's position at the conversations with the Syrian Orthodox in 532: see the text translated in my 'The conversations with the Syrian Orthodox under Justinian (532)', *Orientalia Christiana Periodica* 47 (1981), pp. 113–17.

43. E.g. Metropolitan Paulos Mar Gregorios, 'The Christological consensus reached in Vienna', *Wort und Wahrheit*, Suppl. 3 (1976), pp. 21–2. Compare also note 45.

44. See, for example, A. Grillmeier in *Wort und Wahrheit*, Suppl. 2 (1974), pp. 28–40.

45. Thus on Severus' understanding of what φύσις meant, the Chalcedonian definition would have seemed objectionable to Chalcedonians themselves.

46. Babai draws attention to this in his *Liber de Unione* (ed. Vaschalde), pp. 233, 249–50. At the other end of the theolo-

Any atomistic approach, then, which concentrates on individual formulae, images or analogies, will inevitably lead to a static and unsatisfactory perception of a particular Christological tradition, such as that of the Church of the East. What is needed, rather, is an approach which seeks to understand that tradition against the backdrop of its theology and anthropology as a whole (especially its understanding of the nature of the Fall), for only then will the full dynamic of the tradition become apparent.

Translations.[47]

(a) *Synod of* 410.

(It was pointed out above (I.a.1) that we have two texts claiming to be the declaration of faith made at this synod, of which the West Syrian recension has recently been shown to be the original, while the text preserved in the East Syrian Synodicon must date at the earliest from the sixth century. Both forms of text are translated here; in the West Syrian recension verbal agreements with the East Syrian (which represents the 'pure' Nicene symbol) are italicized).

(1) *West Syrian recension.*[48]

We believe in one God, Father, who in his Son, made *heaven and earth;* and in him were established the worlds above and below; and in him he effected the resurrection and renovation for all creation.

And in his *Son,* the *Only-Begotten who was born* from him, *that is, from the essence (ituta) of* his *Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God; he was born and was not made; who is of the same* nature *(bar kyaneh)*[49] *as his Father; who, for the sake of us human beings* who were created through him, *and for the sake of our salvation, descended* and put on a body and became man, *and suffered and rose* on the third *day, and ascended to heaven* and took his seat at the right hand of his Father; *and he is coming* in order to *judge* the *dead* and the *living.*

And we confess the living and *holy Spirit*,,[50] the living Paraclete who (is) from the Father and the Son;[51];

And in one Trinity and in one Essence *(ituta)* and in one will *(sebyana).*

(2) *East Syrian recension.*[52]

We believe in one God, Father Almighty, maker of heaven and of earth, and of all that is seen and that is not seen.

And in one Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, who was born from the Father, the Only-Begotten, that is, from the Essence (*ituta*) of the Father; God from God and Light from Light, true God from true God, who was born and was not made, of the same essence *(bar ituta)* as the Father, through whom everything came into being that is in heaven and on earth; who for the sake of us human beings and for the sake of our salvation came down from heaven and was embodied and inhominated (*etgasham w-etbarnash)*; and he suffered and rose after three days, and ascended to heaven; and he is coming to judge the living and the dead.

And in the Holy Spirit.

Those who say that there is (a time) when he was not, and that before he was born he was not, or that he came into being from nothing; or who say that he is from (another) *qnoma* or from another essence; or who consider that the Son of God is subject to change and alteration *(meshtahlpana w-meshtagnyana)*: such people the Catholic and Apostolic Church anathematizes.

(b) *Synod of* 486[53]

Let the faith of us all be in the single confession of the one divine nature which exists in the three complete *qnome* of the single true and eternal Trinity of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, (a confession) by which paganism is vanquished and Judaism judged.

(p. 55) Further, let our faith in the dispensation of Christ be in the confession of the two natures, of the divinity and of the humanity, while none of us shall dare to introduce mixture, mingling or confusion (*muzzaga aw hultana aw bulbala)* into the differences (*shuhlape*) of these two natures; rather, while the divinity remains preserved in what belongs to it, and the humanity in what belongs to it, it is to a single Lordship and to a single (object of) worship that we gather together (*mkannshinan*) the exemplars (*parshagne)*[54] of these two natures, because of the

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gical spectrum Philoxenus makes the same point in *Tractatus Tres de Trinitate et Incarnatione* (Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium 9, pp. 152–5).

47. The translations are deliberately on the literal side; brackets denote words added by myself for the sake of the sense, or occasionally, where it has been thought helpful, the corresponding Syriac term. Annotation is kept to a minimum and only direct biblical quotations are noted; each of the passages deserves a full commentary, but that would be out of place here. Much shorter extracts from these synods can also be found translated in W.A. Wigram, *An Introduction to the History of the Assyrian Church*, chapter 13.

48. Translated from Vööbus' edition (see note 5); the text is reproduced by de Halleux (title in note 5), with a few modifications (notably the addition of 'Almighty' in the first clause, on the basis of Paris syr. 62).

49. The standard early translation of ὁμοούσιος: see above II.c.

50. Syriac *ruha...qaddisha;* the East Syrian recension here retains the older terminology, *ruha d-qudsha.*

51. Note the absence of 'proceeds', which gives a different nuance; de Halleux (title in note 5) offers some pertinent observations on the wording here, pp. 172–3.

52. Translated from Chabot, *Synodicon Orientale* (henceforth *SO*), pp. 22_{24}–23_{4}.

53. Translated from *SO*, pp. 54_{29}–55_{9}.

54. This is not a term used elsewhere in a Christological context it seems; in translations from Greek the word usually represents ἀντίγραφον.

perfect and inseparable conjunction *(nqiputa)*[55] that has occurred for the divinity with respect to the humanity.

And if someone considers, or teaches others, that suffering and change *(hashsha w-shuhlapa)*[56] have attached *(nqep)* to the divinity of our Lord, and (if) he does not preserve, with respect to the union *(hdayuta)* of the *prosopon* of our Saviour, a confession of perfect God and perfect Man, let such a person be anathema.

(c) *Synod of* 544 (Letter of Mar Aba)[57]

We believe in one eternal God who has no beginning or end; and there was never a time when he was not, but (rather) he was continually and is always. Neither has death or change in any way ever had authority over him, nor will it; nor has he been, nor will he be, (involved) in it; and he alone is not made and not created: the maker and creator of all existing things and all natures. He alone has never been in need of anything, nor will (ever) be in need: he who fills all our needs. And he it is who, by his indication *(remzeh)*, controls everything and guides everything, the provisioner of all. And he is the giver of the two testaments, of the Old and of the New. And there is no other God apart from him; he is the first and he is the last. He is omniscient and the giver of wisdom. And it was he who was preached to the ancients through the prophets in singleness of nature *(ba-hdanayut kyana)* 'in all sorts of ways and in all sorts of forms, and in the latter days he spoke with us in his Son whom he appointed as heir of everything' (Hebr 1: 1–2) who is Christ our Lord, he who was born in the flesh from the holy Virgin Mary without intercourse with a man, by the power of the Holy Spirit, as was told her by the angel Gabriel: 'The Holy Spirit will come and the Power of the Most High will overshadow you' (Luke 1:35).[58] And this Son, Christ, was in the world for thirty years, in that he was making repayment on behalf of the debts of nature and of Adam, the head of our race, and of the law of Moses, as Scripture said: 'He was under the law', and 'he bought us (back) from the curse of the law by his perfect righteousness' (Gal. 4:4 and 3:13). At the age of thirty he approached and was baptized by the blessed John, and he sanctified our baptism by his baptism. And after he had been baptized and had contended with Satan and overcome him in the fast of forty days in the wilderness, he chose the holy apostles and performed signs and wonders.

And when he had fulfilled on earth the work of him who had sent him, that is, his teaching, which he confirmed by various mighty deeds that he performed, and (after) he had handed over the mystery of his Body and his Blood to his disciples, then he sealed his dispensation by his passion and his death on the Cross. And on the third day he overpowered Death by the might of his divinity, and he rose after three days as he had told the reprobate Jews: 'Undo[59] this temple, and after three days I will raise it up', speaking of the temple of his body, as the Evangelist explained (John 2:19, 21). This (temple) which the Jews had undone, he rebuilt with immortal and immutable life.

And after he had arisen from the dead he appeared to his disciples and confirmed them concerning his resurrection, saying 'Touch me and recognize that a spirit does not have flesh (p. 542) and bones, such as you observe that I have (Luke 24: 39). And after forty days he ascended to heaven while there were looking on (both) his disciples and those to whom it had been said by the angels 'This Jesus whom you have seen ascend to heaven' (Acts 1:11), (as if) to say that, as he ascended in his true body, that is, in his perfect humanity, 'thus is he going to come' at the end of the world in the glory of his angels in order to raise the dead and to judge the whole creation, as it is written 'God is going to judge all the earth in righteousness at the hands of a man whom he has separated out; and he has caused everyone to turn to faith in him, in that he has raised him from the dead' (Acts 17: 31).

And at the end of the days of Pentecost he sent upon his disciples the Holy Spirit from heaven in the likeness of tongues of fire, just as he had told them: 'Do not leave Jerusalem until you have put on might from on high' (Luke 24:49). And when the grace of the Holy Spirit had rested upon the holy apostles, it taught them all truth, as our Lord had told them: 'When the Spirit, the Paraclete, comes upon you, he will teach you all truth' (John 16:13). And what truth did the Holy Spirit teach his disciples, if not concerning the holy Trinity, which was hidden from all created things, and had been spoken of in veiled terms *(remzana'it)* in the Old Testament, but at the baptism of our Lord was revealed as though in image in the Son who was recognised in him who was being baptized, and (in) the Father who was testifying concerning him, and in the Holy Spirit who rested upon him like a dove: this is the mystery of the Trinity to which he referred when speaking to the apostles

55. Corresponds to συνάφεια, another once respectable term which most Greek writers dropped after the 430s.

56. Note the combination; among East Syrian writers 'suffering' has something of the Stoic connotations of πάθος, hence their abhorrence of Theopaschite language.

57. Translated from *SO*, pp. 541_8–543_1.

58. Here, as is the norm in East Syrian exegetical tradition, the 'Power of the Most High' is associated with the Holy Spirit; this contrasts with West Syrian exegetical tradition which identifies the 'Power' as the Logos.

59. The word used here and elsewhere in these texts *(shraw)* is not that of the Peshitta or Old Syriac Gospels, but is evidently derived from the Syriac versions of Theodore's writings where *shraw* occurs (e.g. *Commentary on the Creed*, ed. Mingana in Woodbrooke Studies V, p. 200).

after his resurrection: 'Go, instruct and baptize in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit' (Matt. 28:19). These things came to be known with exactitude by the gift of the Holy Spirit upon the disciples; for they learnt from the Holy Spirit that Christ is not an ordinary man, nor is he God naked of the garment of humanity[60] in which he had been revealed, but(that) he is Christ God and Man, that is, the humanity which has been anointed with the divinity which anointed it, as it is said: 'For this reason God your God has anointed you with the oil of gladness above your companions' (Ps. 44 (45):8). This indicates concerning his humanity.[61] And again: 'In the beginning was the Word' (John 1:1). This indicates his divinity, which exists eternally for ever, which created all that is visible and all that is invisible.

And (the divinity) exists in three *qnomin*, without beginning, without change, without suffering and without division, (the *qnome)* being the Father Son and Spirit, as our Lord said; for in him was the eternal Trinity made known, as he indicated concerning himself: 'Undo this temple' (John 2:19), that is, the humanity which he had put on; and again 'My Father who dwells in me performs these works' (John 14:10); and again, concerning the Holy Spirit who (was) in him, saying 'The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, for this reason he has anointed me' (Luke 14:18).

Thus from the name of Christ we have learnt concerning the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit: and from this same (name) we have understood concerning his humanity. In it is (p. 543) the seal of the entire confession of Christianity.

(There follow various anathemas, including one aimed at the Theopashites).

(d) *Synod of* 554[62]

Before everything else we preserve the upright confession of two natures in Christ, that is, his divinity and his humanity. And we preserve (p. 98) the characteristics *(dilayata)* of the natures, by which (sc. the characteristics) we get rid of confusion and disturbance *(bulbala w-duwwada)*, alteration and change *(w-shugnaya w-shuhlapa)*.

We also preserve the number of the *qnome* of the Trinity as threefold, and we confess the single true and ineffable union *(hdayuta)* in the single true Son of the one God, the Father of truth.

In the case of anyone who considers or speaks of two Christs, or two Sons, or who for one reason or another, and by some device or other, arouses (thought of) a quaternity, such a person have we anathematized and we do anathematize him, considering him to be a limb rejected by the entire body of Christianity.

(e) *Synod of* 576[63]

We have offered the worship of acknowledgement and thanksgiving to God, Lord of all dominions, whose nature is high and exalted, and glorified above all words of praise, the eternal Being *(itya)* who alone truly exists eternally, ineffably, hidden, unattainable, uncontained, without beginning and without end, having authority over all, maker of all created things, removed from all changes and alteration, distanced from all sufferings and stirrings *(hashsin w-zaw'in)*, in whom all exists while he exists outside everything and inside everything in the glory of his majesty; and with the indication *(remza)* of his authority and with the might of his power he controls and governs, provides for and performs everything; the giver of the Old and the fulfiller of the New (Testament); through his holy prophets he taught former (generations) concerning the singleness of his nature *(hdanayut kyaneh)*, and by various indications he manifests concerning the glorious *qnome* of his threefold being *(tlitayuteh*, Trinity).

While in latter days, according to the word of the universal apostle Paul (Hebr. 1:2) the elect, he was revealed to us and spoke with us in his Son Christ our Lord; in him the glorious *qnome* of his Father and of himself and of the Holy Spirit became known in a new way, when he taught and commanded his holy apostles, his true preachers, 'God, instruct all peoples, and baptize them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. (Matt. 28:19); and when they have been reborn from baptism, give them sustenance appropriate to their requirement– the teaching and commandments and admonitions that I gave you, that they should keep them and meditate on them, for from them they are able to enter and enjoy the kingdom of heaven; and behold I am with you all the days until the end of the world (Matt. 28:20), amen'.

It is he who lowered himself of his own will for the salvation of our nature that had grown old and worn out through acts of sin; and he took for himself a perfect temple for the dwelling of his divinity, in an inseparable way, from Mary the holy virgin; and he was conceived and born from her by the power of the Most High: Christ who is in the flesh, who is recogni-

60. This is again archaic imagery (e.g. Ephrem *Hymns on Faith* 19:2) which Greek writers later tended to drop; it derives from a Christological interpretation of Genesis 49:11. (The phrase 'He put on the body' is the standard metaphor for the Incarnation in early Syriac tradition: see my 'Clothing metaphors as a means of theological expression in Syriac tradition', in ed. M. Schmidt, *Typus, Symbol Allegorie bei den östlichen Vätern und ihren Parallelen im Mittelalter*, Regensburg 1982), pp. 11–40).

61. In East Syrian tradition the 'anointing' of the humanity of Christ is understood as having taken place already at his very conception: for a specific statement to this effect see Babai, *Liber de Unione* (ed. Vaschalde), pp. 278–9.

62. Translated from *SO*, pp. 97_{31}–98_{7}.

63. Translated from *SO*, pp. 113_{7}–114_{8}. There are a number of reminiscences of Mar Aba's letter (III.c).

zed and confessed (as being) in two natures, God and Man, one Son. In him the oldness of our nature was renewed, and in the robe of his humanity the debt of our race was repaid, in his drawing close (*metqarrbanuteh*) to suffering and the death of the cross. And by the power of his divinity he rose from the dead after three days, as he had told the Jews: 'Undo this temple and after three days I will raise it' (John 2:19), which (p. 114) the evangelist interpreted, saying 'Now he spoke of the temple of his body' (John 2:21). And in his resurrection he shattered the bars of death and broke down the walls of Sheol; he rendered ineffective the strength of sin and brought low the pride of Satan who had been roaring fiercely for the destruction of our nature. And he gave hope and a pledge of resurrection from the dead to all the world through his own resurrection and his going around with his disciples up to the time of his ascension...

(f) *Synod of* 585.

(1) Profession of faith at the synod:[64]

'We believe in one God, Father Almighty, and in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, and in one Holy Spirit who proceeds from the Father'. Even though the serial reading of the words places the names of the Holy Trinity at a distance (from each other), owing to the attachment (in each case) of those terms which particularly and properly attach to them, yet the sense and the meaning of this composition of the Fathers requires such an attachment in order to indicate that the Trinity is above number, so that it might be realized that the words 'one...one...one' point to the single nature of the (divine) essence; as it is said 'The Lord your God is one' (Deut. 6:4). The words 'Father, Son, and Holy Spirit' indicate the difference of the *qnome* of the essence, following the tradition of the Gospel of Christ our Saviour: 'Go forth, convert all peoples and baptize them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit' (Matt. 28: 19).

By adding 'God' and 'Lord' and 'Spirit' they also attached common terms to the individual names, 'Father', 'Son,' 'Holy Spirit'. The fathers clearly showed that these were common terms, each one of which, that is, (all) three, extend to the three *qnome*, for it is clear and without dispute that the Father is God and Lord and Spirit, and the Son is Lord and God and Spirit, and the Holy Spirit is Spirit and Lord and God.

Our Fathers did well to utter the confession of the Trinity briefly; by it they taught wisely and fully the equality of nature and the equality of essence and the difference of the *qnome* and the singleness (*hdanayut*) of the Godhead. They proclaimed equality of essence and equality of nature, then, as though to stop the crazy mouth of Arius who wickedly devised to split up the equality of essence of the Trinity. And our Fathers proclaimed the difference of the *qnome* of the Trinity to nullify the supposition of the obstinate Jews who suppose that God is one *qnoma*. As for the terms which are extended and are (held) in common, while being attached to the individual names that are not extended, our Fathers proclaimed 'one Godhead', 'one Lordship', 'one spiritual Being' as though to nullify and refute the doctrine of the pagans (p.134) who insanely acknowledge various godheads and lordships.

Having thus overthrown the wickedness of Arius by the proclamation of the equality of essence, and silenced the childishness of the Jews with the difference of the *qnome*, and muzzled the error of paganism too by the singleness of Lordship, then they went on to things which follow on from their confession, attaching 'Almighty' to the words 'one God', and saying 'maker of all that is visible and that is invisible', in that he is the maker and establisher and arranger of all in all.

Likewise they attached to the words 'one Lord' the (further) words 'Jesus Christ', and they showed that the word 'one' is common to the *qnome* of the Trinity, as hinted at above.

The fact that they did not add 'and in one Lord the Son', corresponding to the words 'one God the Father', but instead altered the order of their words and said 'in one Lord, Jesus Christ', will not escape the notice of right believers, for this abundandly points to the humanity of God the Word and it wisely proclaims the single union (*hdayuta*) of the divinity and the humanity of Christ, even though the Eutychians speak insanely, defrauding the humanity of the Son of God: for the name 'Christ' is an indicator of his Godhead from the Father and of his humanity from (his) mother indisputably, even though Eutyches and those in error with him may prattle away, defrauding and denying the taking of our humanity, or speaking of the suppression of the humanity of Christ. For the Fathers add, following on (this), 'the Only-Begotten and the First-Born of all created things', that is, Only-Begotten without brothers, with regard to the divinity, and Firstborn of many brothers, that is, Firstborn of all created things, as it is written (Col. 1:15).

And then they add 'Through whom the worlds were established and everything was created', showing that he is cause and maker of all, together with his Father. And again they show, concerning his (divine) essence, that 'he was born from his Father before all worlds, and he was not made: Light from Light, true God from true God', Jesus Christ in his divinity. Again they add, in refutation of Arius, putting 'the Word who is homoousios', that is, of the same nature and of the same essence (*bar kyaneh*

64. Translated from *SO*, pp. 133_{7}–136_{20}. The text is in the form of a running commentary on the Nicene-Constantinopolitan creed; there seem to be some reminiscences of Theodore's commentary (ed. Mingana in Woodbrooke Studies 5), and the last paragraph reflects the last paragraph of III.a.2 above.

w-bar ituteh) 'as the Father, through whom everything came into being', Jesus Christ in his divinity.

Thus, contesting with the invincible armour of true doctrine that they wore against the fantasies and imaginings of the false teachings of the Simonians and the Manichaeans, they say 'He who for the sake of us human beings and for the sake of our salvation came down from heaven, and was embodied *(etgashsham)* of the Holy Spirit and of Mary the Virgin and became man' –Jesus Christ in the unification of his natures *(ba-mhayydut kyanaw)* and in his manifestation in the flesh and in his embodiment. The unification of the natures, of the divinity and of the humanity, is an indication that he came down and was embodied and became man: (p. 135) it informs, without dispute, concerning the taking of our humanity, thus removing from all sides the empty fancies of the Simonians and Mani who deny the fleshly state *(besranuteh)* and the embodiment and manifestation of God the Word who took our humanity and resided *('mar)* in it, as (John) said: 'The word became[65] flesh and dwelt among us' (John 1:14) – in order that the magnitude of the grace of him who descended and resided in us might be all the more manifested. For the wicked Arius, by applying both the exalted and the lowly things to the nature of the Word's divinity, not knowing how to allocate them singly and individually as truth demands,[66] stumbled and fell on this point, going astray himself and leading (others) astray, (as a result of which) he was anathematized and driven out.

The Fathers add further and complete the wording about the dispensation: after the teaching on the divine nature of the Only–Begotten, and after the teaching on the unification of the natures of Christ–that is, of his unchanged and undying divinity and of his humanity that is not abused or absorbed–they attach teaching concerning his humanity. And, just as they showed clearly above concerning his divinity, (so) they will show openly concerning his humanity which was taken for our sakes and for our salvation, and for the renovation[67] of all created things, saying 'And he was crucified for us in the days of Pontius Pilate, and he suffered and died and was buried and rose after three days as the holy Scriptures say'. Jesus Christ in his humanity, or, to utter the truth, in his fleshly state *(besranuteh)* accepted the death of the cross for our sakes.

It is obvious to all who are orthodox in their confession that just as he did not suffer or die according to the nature of his divinity, neither did his soul receive the sentence *(apophasis)* of death, in that the nature of the soul is not constituted so that it is subject to the limit of death, (as) our Lord himself testifies: 'Do not fear those who kill the body; they are unable to kill the soul' (Matt. 10:28). Also testifying to this is the fact that after our Lord had been crucified and his holy body had died and been buried, in his soul he went to Paradise.

The blessed Fathers then go on: 'And he ascended to heaven and sat at the right hand of his Father' –Jesus Christ in his humanity: for it was in his humanity that he received exaltation and the seat at the right hand, and not in his divinity, for he had been eternally and without beginning with his Father.

'And he will come in glory to judge the living and the dead; whose kingdom has no end' –Jesus Christ in his divinity and in his humanity.

After they had spoken against the ejected bands of the Anomoeans, they turned themselves to the wickedness of Macedonians who had blasphened against the Holy Spirit, and they said 'And in one Holy Spirit, Lord, life–giving, who proceeds from the Father and is worshipped with the Father and the Son; who spoke in the prophets and apostles'. Thus by their divine teaching the Fathers preached magnificently concerning (p.136) the *qnoma* of the Holy Spirit, showing him to be of the same essence and of the same nature as the Father and the Son. As it is said, 'He searches out everything, even the depths of God' (I Cor. 2:10).

This is the faith without corruption; this is its sense, put briefly, following the sequence of its phrases. By it the person *(prosopon)* of Christ and the natures of his divinity and his humanity are fully proclaimed, in opposition to those who confess his divinity but deny his humanity, and in opposition to those who confess his humanity but deny his divinity, and in opposition to those who deny his divinity and confess that he is an ordinary man, or who liken him to one of the just.

Because our blessed Fathers cause the baptized to inherit the wealth of their faith, they further add: 'And in one holy, catholic and apostolic Church, and in one baptism for the forgiveness of sins; and in the resurrection of the dead and in the new life, and in the world to come'.

After having thus richly and fully proclaimed the truth they turned from this to the anathema on Arius and those who had gone astray with him–on those who say 'There is a time when he was not' and 'Before he was begotten he was not', or 'He came into being out of nothing', or who say that he is from (another) *qnoma* or another essence, or who consider the Son of God to be subject to change and alteration: (all) these the catholic and apostolic Church anathematizes–heretics who in their stubborness have dared to attribute to the nature and *qnoma* of the

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65. The Syriac can just as well mean 'was'.

66. It is worth noting that part of the Church of the East's abhorrence of Theopaschite language stems from this anti-Arian stance.

67. This interestingly reflects the wording of the West Syrian recension of the profession of faith of 410, confirming de Halleux's view that this recension preserves the original text; cp also Isho'yahb I's profession of faith, III.f.2 below.

divinity and (divine) essence of the Word the characteristics *(dilayata)* and sufferings of the nature of Christ's humanity, things which sometimes, because of the perfect union that took place for the humanity of Christ with his divinity, are allocated to God by economy, but not by nature.

(2) Confession of faith composed by Isho'yahb I[68]

We believe in one eternal God, uncontained, without beginning and without end;[69] a living spirit, hidden, unattainable, whose nature power and authority have no limit or boundary; who knows all prior to all, giver of wisdom, who alone is wise, maker and lord of all created things, visible and invisible, by the indication *(remza)* of whose will the worlds above and below were established and set up; the beneficent governor and upright judge, the wise provisioner of this world and the world to come, giver of all graces, who never wearies or proves lacking, who is not changed or subject to blame, the Being *(itya)* without cause, the cause of all, from whom is everything, because of whom is everything, belonging to whom is everthing, (directed) towards whom is everything; the one timeless Godhead, three *qnome* without any beginning which are perfect in everything and do not lack in anything; the one God who is known, confessed and worshipped in the three *qnome*, of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, who are distinct and united in an ineffable wonder, equal, not confused, conjoined *(nqipin)*, not intermingled, alike but different: alike in their equality of nature, but distinct in the distinction of *qnome;* one Father, beside whom there is no other Father, who begat eternally without himself being born, cause that has no cause, (p. 194) maker of everything, from whom everthing was established; one Son, beside whom there is no other Son, who was born eternally, but did not beget, the causer *('elltana)* from the Cause *('ellta)*, the cause of everything with the Father, without whom there was not even a single thing that came into being; one Holy Spirit, beside whom there is no other Spirit, who proceeds, who did not beget and was not born, proceeding from the Father eternally, the causer *('elltana)* from the Cause, the cause of everything along with the Father and the Son, who 'searches out everything, even the depths of God' (1 Cor. 2:10).

One nature which is not reduplicated, three *qnome* who do not become four; (whose) fullness *(shumlaya)* is one-fold *(hdana'it)* and indication *(shudda'a)* is threefold *(tlita'it);* one nature eternally, in which and with which are also the *qnome* eternally; and with it the Son is born eternally, and with it the Spirit proceeds eternally; at once nature, at once *qnome*, at once Father, at once Son, at once Holy Spirit, one God and not three Gods–let the crazy Marcion wail; three *qnome* and not one *qnoma*-let the errant Sabellius wail, and along with him Paul of Samosata who denied the Essence *(ituta)* of the Word before the ages...

This is the Christianity that the Holy Spirit taught through the apostles and through the prophets concerning the revelation of God the Word and concerning his dispensation in the body, and concerning his embodiment for our sakes and for the sake of our salvation, and for the renovation and restoration of all created things.

Out of his great love with which he loved us he departed from the bosom of his Father voluntarily and without being changed, and he came to the world, while being in the world, as it is written (John 1:10); the hidden one who was revealed in the flesh: 'The Word became flesh and dwelt among us' (John 1:10). He became, but was not changed–he who is 'the form of God emptied himself and took the form of a servant' (Phil. 2.7);[70] 'he took', but did not add (to himself), for both in his 'becoming' and in his 'taking' his Essence remained without change or addition. Jesus Christ, Son of God, God the Word, Light from Light. He came down and was embodied and became man, by dispensation, above alteration and change, our Lord God, Jesus Christ. He who was born from the Father before all worlds in his divinity was born in the flesh from Mary the ever-Virgin in latter times, one and the same (Person), but not in the same (way) (p. 195). 'The Word became flesh'–in an indivisible union *(hdayuta)*-'and dwelt among us'. O profundity of the riches of faith! 'He became', but was not changed: let the Eutychians and Apollinarians wail; 'he took', but did not add (anything): let the Photinians and Paulinians wail.

Again I say, let the abusers and schimatics listen, and let them be united to the Church; let them not be like old rags cut off from the harmony of concord; let them not rend the perfect garment of faith and baptism, woven with divine craftsmanship by the operation of the Spirit, the Lord. The soldiers who crucified him did not dare, and were not able, to rend the garment of Christ (John 19:23–4[71]); so you (singular) should not tear the perfect garment of the harmony of the apostolic Church; rather, listen to the truth of the faith and remain inside the ecclesiastical sheepfolds, together with all the Church redeemed by the blood of the great Shepherd of the flock, Jesus Christ the Son of God, God over all, born in his divinity from the Father, without a mother, eternally;

68. Translated from *SO*, pp. 193_{16}–194_{13}, 194_{21}–195_{34}. There are some reminiscences of Mar Aba's letter (III.c) as well as of the profession of faith of 585 (III.f.l).

69. I omit here a phrase which is badly corrupted.

70. Isho'yahb in fact uses two different Syriac words corresponding to the repeated μορφή in Greek (in this he follows the Peshitta New Testament).

71. For the history of this exegesis of the passage see M. Aubineau, 'Dossier patristique sur Jean 19:23–4', *La Bible et les Pères* (Strasbourg 1971) pp. 9–50.

one and the same, but not in the same (way), he was born in his humanity from (his) mother, without a father, in latter times; and he suffered in the flesh and was crucified and died and was buried, in the days of Pontius Pilate; and he arose from the dead after three days.

He suffered in the flesh, Christ the Son of God, one and the same; but in the nature of his divinity Christ the Son of God is above sufferings: impassible and passible, Jesus Christ, creator of the worlds and recipient of sufferings, who for our sakes became poor, while being rich (2 Cor. 8:9). God the Word receives the abuse of sufferings in the temple of his body according to the dispensation in the supreme inseparable union, while in the nature of his divinity he does not suffer, as our Saviour himself said: 'Undo this temple and after three days I will raise it' (John 2:19). And because the Jews in their stubbornness imagined that he was speaking about the temple (made) of stones, the evangelist interprets the Saviour's utterance, saying 'He spoke concerning the temple of his body' (John 2:21). Our Lord himself indicates the sublimity[72] of the prosopic union *(hdayuta parsopayta)* unitedly and unconfusedly, when he says: 'No one has gone up to heaven except he who came down from heaven' (John 3: 13): the Son of Man is he who came down from heaven, the Son of Man is the one who is in heaven. Christ, who came down without any change in his divinity from heaven, being unembodied and in the limitlessness of his divinity in heaven, in his humanity is raised up to heaven, while not destroying his visible nature, following the angelic indication: 'This Jesus who has gone up from you to heaven, shall come in like fashion as you have seen him ascend to heaven' (Acts 1:11). Christ is Only-Begotten *(ihidaya)* and united *(mhayyda)*: Only-Begotten with respect to the Father, and united and unseparated (in the union), for his divinity does not die or get destroyed or changed, while his humanity is not stolen away or hidden or absorbed...

(g) *Synod of* 596[73]

(We profess the Nicene faith) which accurately and luminously teaches us the confession of the glorious nature of the holy Trinity, of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit; which reveals and manifests to us the glorious mysteries of the dispesation of God the Word which he perfected and fulfilled at the end of times in the nature of our humanity.

By this faith paganism, which confesses a plurality of gods, is vanquished, and Judaism, which does not confess the Trinity of *qnome*, is judged, and all (kinds) of heresy, which deny the divinity or humanity of our saviour Jesus Christ, are rebuked and condemned. We accept it in the precise sense of our holy Fathers, expounded by the glorious among the orthodox, the blessed Theodore of Antioch, bishop of the town of Mopsuestia, the Exegete of the divine Scriptures.[74] With it all the orthodox everywhere have agreed and do agree, and it has also been held by all our holy Fathers who governed this apostolic and patriarchal see of our government.

We anathematize and alienate from our company anyone who denies the nature of the divinity or the nature of the humanity of our Lord Jesus Christ; or anyone who (p. 198) introduces into the union of the Son of God any mixture, mingling, or composition or confusion; or anyone who (introduces) suffering or any of the base things of humanity in any way into the glorious nature of his divinity; or anyone who considers the dominical temple of God the Word to be ordinary man –(that temple) which, in an inexplicable mystery and in a union that cannot be understood, he united to himself from the womb of the holy virgin in a union which is for ever, indissoluble and inseparable.

We also abhor anyone who introduces a quaternity into the holy Trinity; or anyone who calls the one Christ Son of God two Sons or two Christs; or anyone who does not say that it was God the Word himself who perfected the passion for (*lit.* of) our salvation in the body of his humanity, being in it and with it and by it in the womb and on the cross and in the passion, and for ever, inseparably, while the glorious nature of his divinity did not share in any of the sufferings.

But we believe firmly, in accordance with the words and sense of the Scriptures and the traditions of our holy Fathers, in one Lord Jesus Christ, Only-Begotten Son of God, who was born before the foundations of the world in his divinity spiritually without a mother, and at the end of times was born of the holy virgin in the flesh *(besrana'it)* without intercourse of a man, by the power of the Holy Spirit. In his divinity that is from everlasting and in his humanity that is from Mary he is the one true Son of God, who, in the nature of his humanity, received for our sakes suffering and death. And by the power of his divinity he raised up his body without corruption after three days, and he promised resurrection from the dead and ascension to heaven, and a new world, indissoluble and lasting for ever.

With this true and apostolic faith do we agree, and both we and the flocks entrusted to us preserve it. And if anyone dares to tear up, or does not accept, this deposition of the true faith, we will make him an alien to the entire company of Christians, ejected and driven out, until he accepts correction and agrees to this true faith of the Church.

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72. Reading *m'lywt'* for *m'lnwt'* ‚entry'.

73. Translated from *SO*, pp. 197_{10}–198_{24}. There are some reminiscences of III. b. and f.l. above.

74. The reference will be to the text published by Mingana (see note 64).

(h) *Synod of* 605.[75]

One and the same (sc. with the creeds of Nicaea and Constantinople) is our opinion and faith in the holy Trinity and the mysteries of the dispensation of our Lord in the body. (It is the faith) which our Fathers have taught us and shown to us; it consists for us in the confession of the one divine nature, the eternal Being, Creator of all created things, cause of all, having no beginning and possessing no end, who exists continually without ending, who is above the limit and boundary of suffering, change and alteration of any sort. Never has anything had, nor will it ever have, authority over him: he controls all and governs all; for he is the first and the last, who indicated concerning our renovation through the prophets in the Old (Testament), and revealed it through the apostles in the New, by means of his beloved Son, whom he had made heir of everything and in whom he had made known concerning the Trinity of his *qnome*, which are without beginning and without change, a single Godhead, unattainable, a single eternal nature who is known in three *qnome*, of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

Who, through the Firstfruits from us (1 Cor. 15:23), effected the liberation and renovation of our race, for 'the form of God took the form of a servant', according to the apostolic utterance (Phil. 2:7), and in him he perfected and completed his exalted dispensation for the sake of our salvation: the form of God in the form (p. 201) of a servant, the single Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom everything came into being, perfect God and perfect Man: perfect God in the nature of his divinity, and perfect Man in the nature of his humanity, two natures, of divinity and of humanity, the divinity being preserved in what belongs to it, and the humanity in what belongs to it; and they are united in a true union (*hdayuta*) of the one person (*prosopon*) of the Son, Christ. And the divinity perfected the humanity in the suffering, as it is written, while suffering change and alteration of any sort did not enter into the divinity.

This faith we have agreed to and have held. All the holy fathers have agreed to it, and we too hold it in the pure concurrence of our mind, concurring with it and anathematizing all who slip away from it in any way.

(i) *Assembly of bishops in* 612.[76]

(1) We believe in one divine nature which exists eternally, without beginning, living and life-giving, mighty, creating all powers, wise, providing all wisdom, simple spirit, unlimited, incomprehensible, uncomposed and without parts, unembodied, invisible, unchangeable, impassible, immortal; neither in itself *(b-yateh)*, nor in another, nor with another, is it possible that any suffering or change should enter into it; rather, it is perfect in its essence (*ituteh)* and in all that belongs to it; and it cannot receive addition or subtraction, for it alone is Being (*itya*) and God over all, who is known and confessed in three holy *qnome*, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, a nature with three *qnome* essentially (*tlitay qnome itya'it*), *qnome* with a single eternal nature (*hdanay kyana mtomaya*), between whom there is no distinction apart from the distinct characteristics (*dilayata)* of their *qnome*, (namely) Fatherhood and Sonhood and Procession.

For the rest, everything that is confessed of the (divine) nature in common is likewise confessed of, and is the case with, each of the *qnome* individually, without subtraction. And in that the Father is not passible and unchangeable, (so) too the Son and the Spirit are confessed as being without suffering and without change, along with him and like him. And just as the Father is believed (to be) unlimited and without parts, so too the Son and the Spirit are confessed (as being) without limit and without composition.

Three *qnome*, perfect in everything, in a single Godhead, in a single Power that is not weakened ever, a single knowledge which is not surpassed, a single will which is not deflected, a single authority which is not dissolved: for he creates the world in his grace and guides it with the indication *(remza)* of his will.

Having at the beginning instructed the human race with knowledge of his divinity in a small way, with respect to the measure of the greatness of knowledge of him, and having during the intermediary time (p. 565) been revealed in different visions and various forms to the saints, and having educated and given wisdom to human beings for the increase of their knowledge, by means of various laws; and then, at the end of times, it having pleased his unattainable wisdom that he reveal and make known to rational beings the wonderful mysteries of his glorious Trinity in order to magnify our nature and sow in it the true seed of resurrection from the dead and the new and incorruptible life that receives no alteration unto eternity, in accordance with his foreknowledge and will that is from eternity; therefore, for the sake of us human beings and for the sake of our salvation, the Son of God, the Word, without having departed from his Begetter, 'came to the world and was in the world, and the world came into being through him' (John 1:10).

And because created natures were unable to see the glorious nature of his divinity, he fashioned for himself in exalted manner, from the nature of the house of Adam, a holy temple from the blessed Virgin Mary, a complete man, who was completed without the intercourse with a man that follows the natural course (of events). And he put him on and united him to himself, and in him he was revealed to

75. Translated from *SO* pp. 209_{20}–210_{9}. There are reminiscences of III.b and perhaps of III.c and f.2.

76. Translated from *SO*, pp. 564_{10}–567_{8}. There are reminiscences of III.c,e and f. 1–2.

the world, in accordance with the utterance of the angel to the mother of our Saviour: 'The Holy Spirit shall come and the power of the Most High shall overshadow you; for this reason he who is going to be born from you is holy and shall be called the Son of God' (Luke 1: 35).

Concerning the wonderful conjunction (*neqpa*) and inseparable union (*hdayuta dla purshana*) that took place from the very beginning of its fashioning[77] for the human nature that was taken by God the Word, the 'taker', he taught us that from that point we should recognize as one person (prosopon) our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, who was born from before the worlds, without beginning, from the Father in the nature of his divinity, and who was born latterly of the holy virgin, the daughter of David, in the nature of his humanity; just as God had previously promised to the blessed David: 'From the fruits of your womb shall I cause to sit upon your throne' (Ps. 131(132): 11). And after the outcome of the events the blessed Paul expounded the promise, saying to the Jews concerning David: 'From the seed of this man God has raised up, just as he promised, Jesus the Saviour' (Acts 13:23). And again, he wrote to the Philippians as follows: 'Ponder this in yourselves, that even Jesus Christ, although he is the form of God, took the form of a servant' (Phil. 2:6-7). For who was the one whom he calls 'form of God' if not Christ in the nature of his divinity; and whom again does he name 'form of a servant', if not Christ in his humanity? With respect of the former he says 'he took,' and to the latter 'was taken'; (Thus) it is not possible to confuse the characteristics (*dilayathon*) of the natures; for it is impossible that 'he who took' should become 'who was taken', and that 'he who was taken' should become ,the taker'. (But) it is possible for God the Word to be revealed in the human being whom he put on, and for his human nature to become visible to creation in the mode (*teksa*) of his humanity and in the inseparable union (as) the single Son of God, just as we have learnt and hold. (p. 566) That the divinity should be changed into humanity, or that the humanity should be altered to the nature of the divinity, is impossible; for it is not the case that Being (*itya*) can fall under the compulsion of change or of suffering, for if the divinity is changed, it is no longer a revelation, but a destruction, of the divinity. And if, again, the humanity should depart from its nature, salvation no longer obtains, but a wiping out of the humanity.

For this reason we believe with our hearts and we confess with our lips a single Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, whose divinity is not hidden, and whose humanity was not stolen away, but who is perfect God and perfect Man. When we speak of Christ as perfect God, we are not referring to the Trinity, but to one of the *qnome* of the Trinity, God the Word. And when again we call Christ perfect Man, we are not referring to all mankind, but to that single *qnoma* who was specifically taken, for our salvation, into union with the Word.

For this reason our Lord Jesus Christ, who was born in his divinity from his Father eternally, in latter times for our sakes was born the holy Virgin in his humanity. While he remained, in his divinity, without need and without suffering and without change, in his humanity after his nativity he was also circumcised and grew up, according to the testimony of Luke the evangelist: 'Jesus was growing in stature and in wisdom and in grace before God and mankind' (Luke 2:52); and he kept the law and was baptized in the Jordan by John; and then he began to preach the new covenant, performing wonders by the power of his divinity- the cleansing of lepers, the opening of the eyes of the blind, the chasing out of demons, the resurrection of dead people; while in the nature of his humanity he thirsted, he hungered, and he ate and drank, grew tired and slept; and last of all, for our sakes he gave himself up and was crucified, and he suffered and died–without his divinity having departed from him or having suffered; and his body was wrapped in a shroud and was laid in a place of burial; then after three days he rose, by the power of his divinity, just as he had told the Jews beforehand: 'Undo this temple, and after three days I will raise it up' (John 2:19), which the evangelist interprets, saying, 'He was speaking of the temple of his body, (John 2:21).

And after he arose, he went about on earth with his disciples for forty days, showing them his hands and his feet, saying: 'Feel me and know that a spirit does not have flesh and bones such as you see that I have' (Luke 24:39) – so that both by word and by actions he might assure them of his resurrection, and so that, from the assurance of his resurrection, he might assure in us a hope of our resurrection.

And after forty days he ascended to heaven in the sight of his disciples as they looked on, and a cloud received him, and he was concealed from their eyes, according to the testimony of Scripture (Acts 1:9).

And we confess that he is going to come from heaven in the power and glory of his angels, and he will effect a resurrection for all the race of humanity, and a judgement and examining (p. 567) for all rational beings, just as the angels told the apostles themselves at the time of his ascension: 'This Jesus, who has been taken up from you to heaven, will in like wise come just as you saw him go up to heaven' (Acts 1:11). And by this they openly taught us this too: 'He was taken up to heaven'–and the *qnoma* of his humanity was not dissolved and was not changed, but is preserved in the inseparable union with his divinity in the exalted glory in which he is going to behold, at his final revelation from heaven, the shame of those who cruci-

77. Here, as perhaps elsewhere in this document, we can identify the influence of Babai who isuses this phrase on many occasions (e.g. *Liber de Unione*, pp. 133, 278–9).

iied him and the glory and pride of those who believe fn him.

To him, and to his Father and to the Holy Spirit, be praise and honour, for ever.

(2) From the reply to questions posed by theological opponents:[78]

It is clearly apparent that Christ is perfect God and perfect Man. Now he is said to be God, being perfect in the nature and *qnoma* of divinity, and he is then said to be perfect Man, being perfect in the nature and *qnoma* of humanity. And just as it is made known, from the opposition (expressed in) the words just used, that Christ is two natures and two *qnome*, so too, from the fact that they refer to the one Christ, Son of God, it is made known that Christ is one– not in a oneness *(hdanayut)* of nature and of *qnoma*, but in an the single *prosopon* of Sonhip and the single (source of) authority and single governance and single power and single lordship.

78. Translated from *SO*, p. 575_{11-18}.